Increase in drug prices by pharma companies

†586. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware- of the fact that the prices of certain drugs have been substantially increased by pharma companies;

(b) whether Government would take any action against pharma companies which have increased the prices of drugs in protest against Government policy on curbing price rise; and

(c) the measures to be taken by Government for procurement of cheaper drugs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) and (b) No such information has been brought to the notice of the Government/NPPA that the prices of certain drugs have been substantially increased by pharma companies.

The 74 bulk drugs specified in the First Schedule of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1995 (DPCO, 95) and the formulations based thereon are under price control and their prices are fixed / revised by the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) in accordance with the provisions of the DPCO, 95. The price fixation/revision of the Scheduled medicines is a continuous process under DPCO, 1995.

Prices of non-Scheduled drugs are fixed by the manufacturers themselves keeping in view the various factors like cost of production, marketing/selling expenses, R&D expenses, trade commission, market competition, product innovation, product quality etc. The Government takes corrective measures where the public interest is found to be adversely affected. NPPA regularly monitors the prices and availability of the drugs in the country and wherever required, corrective action is taken in the matter.

(c) Purchase of medicines by Government is made through tenders. These purchases are made in bulk which helps in getting quality drugs at competitive prices.

Panel for negotiation of prices of patent drugs

587. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has formed a panel for negotiating prices of patent drugs;

(b) if so, why the Indian Industry was made a part of this committee and whether Government is also aware that a large number of drugs whose patents have expired in developed countries are now being patented in India; and

(c) what are the recommendations of Government panel and whether it has been put to public scrutiny and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) to (c) A Committee has been constituted in this Department to examine the issue

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

of price negotiations for the Patented Drugs. The Committee has the members from Drug Controller General of India, National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research, Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority and this Department (earlier Department of Chemicals & Petrochemicals) etc. The comprehensive product patent regime was introduced in India from 1.1.2005. It is unlikely in most cases that drugs whose patent have expired in developed countries would get patented in India. The Committee on price negotiations for patented drugs is yet to submit its report to the Government.

Adulteration of gold with iridium and ruthenium

588. SHRI DHARAMPAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the adulteration of gold with iridium;

(b) if so, the complete details in this regard;

(c) how many goldsmiths have been arrested in the country for adulterating the precious metal with iridium and ruthenium; and

(d) the steps being taken against the guilties for adulterating gold, so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) and (b) The Department of Commerce has received an anonymous complaint, *inter-alia,* alleging that jewellers mix iridium with gold. Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) is also aware that gold can be adulterated with iridium. Therefore, provision has been made in the relevant Indian Standard for Gold and Gold Alloys, Jewellery/Artifacts - fineness and marking, IS 1417:1999 that gold alloys for manufacturing jewellery/artifacts and gold solders shall be free from iridium.

(c) and (d) The Scheme of Hallmarking of Gold Jewellery being operated by BIS is voluntary in nature at present. So, BIS ensures that gold jewellery of its licenced jewellers conform to the relevant Indian Standard. BIS has no statutory powers under the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 1986 to take action against jewellers who are not BIS licensees and are involved in malpractices.

Import of pulses

†589.SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that various Government agencies have imported pulses during the last three years;

(b) if so, the names of agencies and the amount of pulses imported from 2005-06 to December, 2008;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.